SUPPLEMENT

TO THE

NONCONFORMIST.

LONDON: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1869. [GRATIS.

Literature.

"THE HOLY GRAIL."*

Mr. Tennyson's new volume will have a double interest to all careful readers and to all admirers of the poet's works. Nothing from his hand could fail of popularity; and, even although the English public were not assured of the severe and exacting discipline of revision and rejection to which he still faithfully subjects everything which he writes, his most spontaneous and careless utterance would have a distinctive value. Sometimes, indeed, the very element of finish and elaboration, while it adds a peculiar charm and airy grace, tends a little to refine away characteristic and individual marks, and to yield a certain sense of sameness and monotony—although a monotony of sweetly sustained music and gracious lift of measure and rhythm. But the first mark of a supremely sincere utterance is its clear and spontaneous directness; and of this undoubtedly we have most token in those little scraps, which Mr. Tennyson has sometimes thrown off in the first flush of a novel experience. It is inevitable that in the case of one who has supplied us with so many benignant sources of pure delight, we should entertain some curiosity respecting him and his manner of thought and life. The feeling, of course, needs to be guarded by the strictest limits, else it would degenerate into sheer impertinent quizzing and prying curiosity, issuing at last in the desire to read some trait or turn of character between the lines even in the case of the most objective and dramatic writing. But looked at from the more liberal point of view, the revelations we incidentally get of the feeling with which such a writer meets and deals with the more common and ordinary experiences of life, are of no slight value, and bring with them a light calculated to enable us to judge more correctly of his more finished work. That little snatch, "In the Valley of Cau-"teretz," and "The Spiteful Letter," and the little parable titled, "A Flower," for instance, are not without a value of their own in this respect. They show us that Mr. Tennyson, while he has great artistic self-restraint and marvellous capacity for seizing and patiently painting many of the most complex phenomena of the present day—phenomena which have a peculiar reference to all the scientific and critical divisions and tendencies that distinguish our time—is yet peculiarly sensitive and impatient of many of the ordinary irritating demands of real life; and, while endeavouring to face them calmly and to wrestle and overthrow them, yet needs some way of relieving an overcharged and restless genius. So we would interpret some of these minor productions. They struggle to reveal a calmness and self-restraint, which they only show the poet in the way of attaining by the mere discipline of writing out, and thus relieving himself of a certain irritation of temper. But just as we could have no sympathy with a man of absolutely *perfect* moral conformation, so these stray confidences, all unconscious as they are, help us to love the poet more, to feel more at home with him, to give ourselves up to his guidance with more implicit trustfulness. We see that he is, after all, so far like ourselves, in the way in which he is moved when the little shadows, no bigger than a man's hand, show themselves on the horizon of his romantic or poetic world,—with its golden air and unclouded skies, the green of its grass made all the richer by the floating snowy clouds above; and somehow he is brought closer to our interests and our sympathies, even while he seems to be escaping from us once more into a romantic world of his own.

Now, the second and peculiar element of interest, which we have said all careful readers of Mr. Tennyson must experience in the perusal of the present volume is, that it reveals very directly his need of relief from mere labours of the fancy, by intermittent contact with the hard, prosaic heart of our modern life. He has here given us four more Idylls of the Round Table, forming now, in conjunction with those which were previously published, something like a complete Tennysonian cycle of Arthurian romance, and immediately following these, he presents us with a second "Northern Farmer," which, not without significance, he designates "New Style." The transition from the atmosphere of the one to that of the other, is very marked; and reveals to us what we cannot help regarding as being most characteristic of Mr. Tennyson's genius. A keen, clear hold of the most characteristic and prosaic features of the life of to-day, together with a bold glance into its very *innermost*, and yet a certain restless reserve, and a necessity of returning upon something like the romance of youth,

"The golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid;"

and a certain satisfaction, too, with the sights and shows of this realm, no less than a brooding content with the poetic forms of his own intellectual relations thereto.

To make our meaning clear, we must begin a sort of narrative-criticism with Mr. Tennyson's last idyll—"The Passing of Arthur," which is, in fact, nothing but the "Morte d'Arthur" of his earliest period literally reprinted *verbatim*, with a slight additional setting of incident and narrative. Now, it has been well remarked, that Mr. Tennyson has nowhere faced the facts of the old romance more faithfully than he has in this "Morte d'Arthur;" and that nowhere else has he made his current of inner and modern meaning play more freely, fluently, and naturally through the channel already wrought for it in the incident and movement of the old story. And if even in the case of this poem it might be urged that, simply owing to the imperious demands of his rhythm, he has sometimes sacrificed the peculiar simple break and faltering pausefulness which marks the original legend, and which imparts to it such a quaint truthfulness and subdued pathetic colouring; how much more might the criticism be applied to some of the later idylls—to "Vivien" or to "Elaine?" It would seem indeed that the more nearly Mr. Tennyson, in describing one circle of poetic intention, has dared to come to the central idea and commanding *motif* of real life, the more he has needed to keep clear a sphere of pure romance or phantasy into which he might escape the further as these reactionary moods were more and more developed in him. What we mean is this—that we see a gradual widening and self-conscious projection of the poetic instincts from one extreme to the other; and the result is, that an intentional effort to conceal and to soften a definite and preconceived lesson by a multiplication of soft and long-sustained images, becomes more and more apparent. While we have now and again, in the later idylls, a majesty, an elevation, a sweep of fancy, certainly in none of them have we anything of that chaste simplicity and clearness which we still admire so much in the "Morte d'Arthur," though even here the same tendency to involved *motives* certainly shows itself. Is it not a fault, for instance, that Arthur, dying from his wound, should speak with such surprising ease and fluency through twenty-five lines of flowingest blank verse, and that he should be made to refer so eloquently to the mystic origin of Excalibur? This would only be an additional reason to Bedivere for his dislike to cast the brand away, although it does not seem that this consideration weighed the least amid many very inferior considerations, scarcely dramatically possible, indeed, where this other had been just the moment before brought so directly before his imagination. Arthur's speech had certainly been far more dramatically consistent had this idea been completely eliminated from it—as being likely, although intensely present to the mind of the dying man, not to have been brought to words in such mastering circumstances. The fact that Mr. Tennyson intimates his complete satisfaction with the form of this early poem, of itself suffices, notwithstanding that in it he has faced the facts of the old romance most closely, to justify us in looking upon it as casting forward, or backward, as we choose to put it, a very peculiar light over the whole of these Idylls, in their relation to the other main line of the poet's productions.

The Arthurian romance has never lost its overmastering attractions for the Laureate; in it he has found a kind of enchanted circle, in which he has known strangest joys, and seen visions with which the realising imagination has not been fit to cope. Up to a certain point of his progress, and even in his most alien moods, flashes of this influence visit him: we see it in "In Memoriam"; it is powerfully apparent in the "Princess," and traces of it are certainly not absent from the famous Dedication of the Idylls to the memory of Prince Albert. "The Northern Farmer," in fact, is almost the only poem in which Mr. Tennyson has completely projected his imagination out of all contact with the romantic sphere, and we may say that the second great period of his career began with the appearance of that poem. And now that he has rounded off the circle of the Idylls, we trust his imagination will be more free to work with complete and undivided strength in this new sphere.

Having thus far cleared the way, we proceed with our account of these poems in their proper order, the direction for which is as follows:—

"The Coming of Arthur.

The Round Table.
Geraint and Eind,
Merlin and Vivien,
Lancelot and Elaine,
The Holy Grail,
Pelleas and Ettarre,
Guinevere.

The Passing of Arthur."

The machinery, if we may call it so, of the "Coming of Arthur," is highly romantic and artificial. Arthur, having gone with his knights to aid Leodogran, King of Cameliard, at his own request, to fight his enemies, is taken with love of Guinevere, for "she was fairest of "all flesh on earth." But though Arthur has rendered Leodogran service, the king is not willing that his daughter should wed with any but a king or a king's son, and therefore he summons to his counsel—

"A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of Arthur's
birth?'

"Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said,
'Sir king, there be but two old men that know:
And each is twice as old as I; and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art; and one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the scholar ran
Before the master, and so far, that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth.

"To whom the King Leodogran replied,
'O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,
Then beast and man had had their share of me:
But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

These three—notwithstanding that Bedivere, "knighted by Arthur at his crowning," spake, telling of how a son was born to King Uther in answer to his prayer, and how he was secretly committed to the care of Merlin—failed to give satisfaction. While Leodogran debated with himself,

"If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
Or born the son of Gorlois, after death,
Or Uther's son, and born before his time,
Or whether there were truth in anything
Said by these three, there came to Cameliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,

* *The Holy Grail, and other Poems.* By ALFRED TENNYSON, D.C.L., Poet Laureate. (London: Strahan and Co.)

Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent;
Whom as he could, not as he would, the king
Made feast for."

After Billicent's account of all the mystery that accompanied the coming of Arthur, the King is still full of questions:—

"To sift his doubtings to the last, [he] ask'd,
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
'The swallow and the swift are near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble prince,
Being his own dear sister;' and she said,
'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am I;'
'And therefore Arthur's sister,' ask'd the King.
She answer'd, 'These be secret things,' and sign'd
To those two sons to pass and let them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking into song
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
And there half heard; the same that afterward
Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

"And then the Queen made answer, 'What know I?
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
Was Gorlois, yea and dark was Uther too,
Well nigh to blackness; but this king is fair
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
Moreover always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the world.'"
. . . . . .
"But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage,
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the King,
Uther, before he died, and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still King, and passing forth to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night—a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost—
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:
And down the wave and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried, 'The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars: 'And this same child,' he said,
'Is he who reigns; nor could I part in peace
Till this were told.' And saying this the seer
Went thro' the straight and dreadful pass of death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side.
. . . . . .
But thou
Fear not to give this King thine only child,
Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old
Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
And echoed by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn
Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,
But pass, again to come; and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their King.'
"She spake, and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing 'Shall I answer yea or nay?'
Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom-King,
Now looming, and now lost; and on the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,
In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,
Streamed to the peak, and mingled with the haze
And made it thicker; while the phantom-King
Sent out at times a voice; and here and there
Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest
Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of ours';
Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, and the king stood out in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ulfius, and Brastias and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea."

Then comes "The Holy Grail," which is, of course, the most important of these added "Idylls." It is the centre of the later glory of the Round Table—the leaping flame, as it were, of the expiring life of the romance already fading in the fuller conquering light of the *true* Christian idea. Mr. Tennyson has endeavoured to refine away certain of the real adhesions of the story in the halo of rather overwrought allegory. The mode of narration, too, is somewhat intricate and confusing. It is Sir Percivale who tells the tale; but the heroine of it is his sister, a nun, and all her story, and that of Galahad, is again put into the mouth of Percivale, who is questioned by a fellow-monk, Ambrosius, as to "who first saw the holy thing to-day?"

"'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms. And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race,
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

"And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man well-nigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
'O, Father!' asked the maiden, 'might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?' 'Nay,' said he,
'I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow.'
And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her.

"For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness.
And O my brother, Percivale,' she said,
'Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail:
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use
To hunt by moonlight'; and the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colours leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail
Pass'd, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,
That so perchance the vision may be seen
By thee and those, and all the world be heal'd."

"'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake of this
To all men; and myself fasted and pray'd
Always, and many among us many a week
Fasted and pray'd even to the uttermost,
Expectant of the wonder that would be.

"'And one there was among us, ever moved
Among us in white armour, Galahad.
'God make thee good as thou art beautiful,'
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him knight; and none,
In so young youth, was ever made a knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they seem'd
Hers, and himself her brother more than I.
. . . . . .
"'But she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
And crimson in the belt a strange device,
A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
Saying, 'My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,
O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
And break thro' all, till one will crown thee king
Far in the spiritual city': and as she spake
She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
Thro' him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
On him, and he believed in her belief.
. . . . . .
"'I sware a vow before them all, that I,
Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'
. . . . . .

So the knights set out on the quest. These are the most significant of Sir Percivale's adventures:—

"'And on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping wave,
And took both ear and eye; and o'er the brook
Were apple-trees, and apples by the brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. 'I will rest here,'
I said, 'I am not worthy of the Quest';
But even while I drank the brook, and ate
The goodly apples, all these things at once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone,
And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns.

"'And then behold a woman at a door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and innocent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who should say,
'Rest here'; but when I touched her, lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the house
Became no better than a broken shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

"'And on I rode, and greater was my thirst.
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the world,
And where it smote the plowshare in the field,
The plowman left his plowing, and fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her pail,
The milkmaid left her milking, and fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but thought
'The sun is rising,' tho' the sun had risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me moved
In golden armour with a crown of gold
About a casque all jewels; and his horse
In golden armour jewell'd everywhere:
And on the splendour came, flashing me blind;
And seem'd to me the Lord of all the world,
Being so huge. But when I thought he meant
To crush me, moving on me, lo! he, too,
Opened his arms to embrace me as he came,
And up I went and touch'd him, and he, too,
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And wearying in a land of sand and thorns.

"'And I rode on and found a mighty hill,
And on the top, a city wall'd: the spires
Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into heaven.
And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd; and these
Cried to me climbing, 'Welcome, Percivale!
Thou mightiest and thou purest among men!'
And glad was I and clomb, but found at top
No man, nor any voice. And then I past
Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
That man had once dwelt there; but there I found
Only one man of an exceeding age.
'Where is that goodly company,' said I,
'That so cried out upon me?' and he had
Scarce any voice to answer, and yet gasp'd
'Whence and what art thou?' and even as he spoke
Fell into dust, and disappear'd, and I
Was left alone once more, and cried in grief,
'Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
And touch it, it will crumble into dust.'
And thence I dropt into a lowly vale,
Low as the hill was high, and where the vale
Was lowest, found a chapel and thereby
A holy hermit in a hermitage.'"

This is Sir Galahad's testimony:—

"I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:
I saw the fiery face as of a child
That smote itself into the bread, and went;
And hither am I come; and never yet
Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
This Holy Thing, fail'd from my side, nor come
Cover'd, but moving with me night and day,
Fainter by day, but always in the night
Blood-red, and sliding down the blacken'd marsh
Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
Blood-red. And in the strength of this I rode,
Shattering all evil customs everywhere,
And passed thro' Pagan realms, and made them mine,
And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and bore them down,
And broke thro' all, and in the strength of this
Come victor. But my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go; and one will crown me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

"While thus he spake, his eye, dwelling on mine,
Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
One with him, to believe as he believed."

The echo of the King's vague prophecy that the Knights in the Quest would follow "wandering fires," seems to run through the whole Idyll like a saddened, tragic undernote and hint of ultimate doom to Arthur's great Table Round.

"Sir Pelleas and Ettarre," being less charged with conscious refinements of allegorical intent, seems to have more fitness as conducting us to Guinevere and back, to the early "Death of Arthur." It is a sad story very sweetly told; as a story perhaps, it is the best of the new Idylls. Sir Pelleas, in the dewy freshness of his youth, is taken with love of Ettarre—"a great lady in her own land," and she, thinking all lovers alike false, leads Pelleas to believe she loves him, when she does not. The practical confusion that must flow from falseness and from a general falling away of the belief in disinterested affection, is powerfully shadowed forth in this Idyll. The Round Table is losing its might—and the gloom that seems to surround Pelleas, as after discovery of Ettarre's falseness, he rushes into hall, crying, "I have no sword," seems but a symbol of the doom that waits on Arthur and them all.

The first portion of "Pelleas" has a tender pastoral-like freshness:—

"King Arthur made new knights to fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest; and as he sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these a youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the fields
Past, and the sunshine came along with him.
"'Make me thy knight, because I know, Sir King,
All that belongs to knighthood, and I love,'
Such was his cry; for having heard the King
Had let proclaim a tournament—the prize
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
The golden circlet, for himself the sword:
And there were those who knew him near the King
And promised for him: and Arthur made him knight.

"And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of the isles—
But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was he—
Riding at noon, a day or twain before,
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to find
Caerleon and the King, had felt the sun
Beat like a strong knight on his helm, and reel'd
Almost to falling from his horse; but saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping side
Whereon a hundred stately beeches grew,
And here and there great hollies under them.
But for a mile all round was open space,
And fern and heath: and slowly Pelleas drew
To that dim day, then binding his good horse
To a tree, cast himself down; and as he lay
At random looking over the brown earth
Thro' that green-glooming twilight of the grove,
It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern without
Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
So that his eyes were dazzled looking at it.
Then o'er it crost the dimness of a cloud
Floating, and once the shadow of a bird
Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes closed.
And since he loved all maidens, but no maid
In special, half-awake he whisper'd, 'Where?
O where? I love thee, tho' I know thee not.
For fair thou art and pure as Guinevere,
And I will make thee with my spear and sword
As famous—O my Queen, my Guinevere,
For I will be thine Arthur when we meet.'

"Suddenly waken'd with a sound of talk
And laughter at the limit of the wood,
And glancing thro' the hoary boles, he saw,
Strange as to some old prophet might have seem'd
A vision hovering on a sea of fire,
Damsels in divers colours like the cloud
Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
On horses, and the horses richly trapt
Breast-high in that bright line of bracken stood:
And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
And one was pointing this way, and one that,
Because the way was lost.

. . . . . .

"She said, 'O wild and of the woods,
Knowest thou not the fashion of our speech?
Or have the Heavens but given thee a fair face,
Lacking a tongue?'
'O damsel,' answer'd he,
'I woke from dreams; and coming out of gloom
Was dazzled by the sudden light, and crave
Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I
Go likewise: shall I lead you to the King?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro' the woods they went.
And while they rode, the meaning in his eyes,
His tenderness of manner, and chaste awe,
His broken utterances and bashfulness,
Were all a burthen to her, and in her heart
She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a fool,
Raw, yet so stale!' But since her mind was bent
On hearing, after trumpet blown, her name
And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the lists
Cried—and beholding him so strong, she thought
That peradventure he will fight for me,
And win the circlet: therefore flatter'd him,
Being so gracious, that he well-nigh deem'd
His wish by hers was echo'd; and her knights
And all her damsels too were gracious to him,
For she was a great lady."

A bright beginning to a grave tragedy, at the root of which lies a kind of disbelief in the possibility of pure affection!

The volume contains, besides "Lucretius" and a semi-philosophical poem, "The Higher "Pantheism," "The Golden Supper," and "The "Northern Farmer, New Style." "The Golden "Supper" is founded on a story in Boccaccio, and is told with the peculiar grace and fulness of music so characteristic of Mr. Tennyson's narrative blank verse. It is on the whole an exquisite poem, suggesting much more than it tells, and taking thereby a peculiar dramatic significance and colour. But we prefer to use what of our space remains to give a few stanzas from the new "Northern Farmer." It is a powerful photograph—each clause adds a characteristic trait, and the colour, as the painters say, is laid on lovingly, with a subdued determination to be only true. This short poem is full of dramatic character, and represents much study and a high degree of that healthy objective imagination which we are wont to admire in some of our older dramatic poets. The former "Northern "Farmer" worshipped the land; this new one worships property—a somewhat different thing, after all. Here are some stanzas:—

I.

Dosn't thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as they canters awaäy?
Proputty, proputty, proputty—that's what I 'ears 'em saäy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty—Sam, thou's an ass for thy pains:
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs nor in all thy braains.

II.

Woä—theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha, Sam: yon's parson's 'ouse—
Doesn't thow knaw that a man mun be eäther a man or a mouse?
Time to think on it then; for thou'll be twenty to weeäk.*
Proputty, proputty—woä then woä—let ma 'ear mysén speäk.

III.

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beän a-talkin' o' thee;
Thou's been talkin' to muther, an' she beän a tellin' it me.

Thou'll not marry for munny—thou's sweet upo' parson's lass—
Noä—thou'll marry fur luvv—an' we boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

. . . . . .

Doa'nt be stunt*: taäke time; I knaw what maäkes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?
But I knaw'd a Quaäker feller as often 'as towd ma this:
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!'

An' I went wheer munny war; an' thy mother coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laäid by, an' a nicetish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty—I niver giv it a thowt—
But warn't she as good to cuddle an' kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt?

. . . . . .

Luvv? What's luvv? Thou can love thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maäkin' 'em goä togither as they've good right to do.
Could'n I luvv thy mother by cause o' 'er munny laäid by?
Naäy—fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight moor fur it: reäson why.

. . . . . .

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'ead, lad, out o' the fence!
Gentleman burn! what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?
Proputty, proputty's ivry thing 'ere, an', Sammy, I'm blest
If it isn't the saäme oop yonder fur them as 'as it's the best.

'Tisn' them as 'as munny as breäks into 'ouses an' steäls,
Them as 'as coäts to their backs an' taäkes their regular meäls.
Noä, but it's them as niver knaws wheer a meäl's to be 'ad.
Taäke my word fur it, Sammy, the poor in a loomp is bad."

* This week.

The "Northern Farmer" is altogether a complete, self-consistent character, delineated with bold touches, given apparently without effort. This itself were enough to make the fame of any other man, and it shows the wonderful reach of Mr. Tennyson's genius, that, while he is dealing with the romance period in the very spirit of a romancer, he can produce work of such solidly realistic character, and yet with such a peculiar breath of the ideal hovering over it. Scarcely elsewhere in English literature have we such powerful creations as this pair of "Northern Farmers."

ETHNOLOGY.†

In the opinion of some, it is a mistake to speak of Ethnology as a science, and if *science* be "certain knowledge orderly arranged," there would seem to be some ground for the opinion. Although the subject of human races has been investigated by many for many years, it has been very difficult to obtain trustworthy information upon it in any compact form. The facts are scattered through such a number of varied works, such as the descriptions of travellers, the journals of missionaries, the contributions of army officers to foreign magazines, the papers on particular tribes written by students of races, or the examination of single languages made by students of language, that it is impossible to take a thorough view of the subject. The common vices of the various writers on ethnology have been the substitution of theory and hypothesis for facts, and the indisposition to confess anything as uncertain, and to admit any want of classification.

Thirty years ago, Mr. Bohn gave us an English edition of Mr. Pickering's "Natural "History of Man," and now Mr. Murray publishes as a Manual of Ethnology, a work by an American author, entitled "The Races of "the Old World." Mr. Brace in his treatise aims at the separation of the theoretical and the fanciful from the scientifically true, and writes not so much for the learned, as for those who, being interested in the study of history, desire to ascertain, readily, the position of a certain people or tribe among the races of men, and to know the latest conclusions of scholars in regard to them.

The manual is divided into eight divisions; the first treats of the leading races in the earliest historical period; the second, of the primitive races in Europe; the third, of the leading races of Asia in the middle ages; the fourth, of the modern Ethnology of Asia; the fifth, of Oceanic Ethnography; the sixth, of the Ethnology of Africa; the seventh, of the races of Modern Europe; and the eighth of the Antiquity of Man, and the question of the Unity or Diversity of Origin. The book furnishes a missing link. History is usually a mere diary of facts, without any link of connection,—a tangled web without a clue. Mr. Brace wishes to supply those felt wants, and regarding history as a description of the life of man, rather than a mere journal of battles and the reigns of Kings; he says:—"In no way can this be made "so clear as by following down the different lines "of descent among the various tribes of the "human family. Events, institutions, forms of "government, revolutions, and changes, which "before appeared isolated and arbitrary, become "under this investigation the natural and normal "development of the qualities of certain races, "and history is made a clear and philosophical "record. Many of our narrow prejudices and "false theories in regard to race—ideas which "have been at the base of ancient abuses and "long-established institutions of oppression—"are removed by this study." A long list of authorities, extending over eleven pages, a copious index, and the abundance of notes, are witnesses to the labour and the scholarship of the author. His standpoint appears in the following quotation:—

"It will be seen from the views presented in this treatise, that we do not regard the races of men now existing as permanent. Their lines converge into one another in the past, and they may meet again in the future, or they may cease altogether. They are long successions of human beings, bound to one another by the tie of blood, whose similar qualities and powers enable us to consider each race as an individual. Like individuals, each group has its peculiar office and duty in the world's development, and manifests on a broad scale the Divine ideas which it is the province of human history to unfold. Like them, too, a race may die young, or it may grow to a vigorous maturity, or it may wear out from luxury and vicious indulgence. The same grand retributive laws, whether physical or moral, that govern individuals, govern races. In a work upon Man, it is not inappropriate to speak, in conclusion, of his moral destiny, especially as connected with Race. The great design of the Creator, in the world, we reverently believe to be, the development of each human being into 'the perfect man in Christ Jesus,' and the building up of an organic '*kingdom of God*.'" And as God hath been once especially manifested in humanity than He might draw all things to HIMSELF, and as all human history is henceforth only the slow working of His Divine Life among men, may we not hope that, after the long lapse of ages, the Spirit of Christ shall so fill the individual man that at length a race shall be born, who shall embody and transmit Divine ideas and inspirations, and thus an organic 'kingdom of God' be formed among nations, and so the goal of Humanity be reached? Then shall the mysterious property of Inheritance—the centre of so many theological problems—which had transmitted the effects of the first violation of conscience and the first indulgence of a selfish will, through innumerable generations with constantly increasing power, at last be turned to the side of goodness and purity, and truth and holiness be equally inherited and embodied among men."

At the meeting of the Ethnological Society, held during last month under the presidency of Professor Huxley, Mr. Gardner, of Her Majesty's Consular Service, China, read a paper on the Chinese people, and stated that "under-"lying all religious forms and creeds was an "idea, more or less vague, of One Supreme "Being." We believe that He who made all things "made of one blood all nations of men," and that notwithstanding the varieties of race, as "face answereth to face," so, notwithstanding the varieties of creed, "heart answereth "to heart." We are glad to find that ethnologists are seeking the trustworthy aid of photography. The attention of the Ethnological Society during their last session was directed to megalithic remains—cromlechs, dolmens, stone circles, &c., such as are found in our own island, as well as in all parts of southern Europe, in India, Arabia, and in Africa along the shores of the Mediterranean. The desirability of collecting evidence of at least relation of race in their builders, which the identity of form and size of these stone wonders suggest, has induced the assistant secretary of the society to send a competent photographer to take views of the stone circles of Wiltshire. And instead of the usual unsatisfactory illustrations, we are to have full-face and profile photographs of the races of man.

The other work is also of American origin, and is inscribed to the American Oriental Society, and it discusses the probable relation of the great peoples and civilisations of antiquity to the Ethiopians or Cushites of Arabia. The International Congress of Prehistoric Archæology has just held its third session at Copenhagen, and has just published the report of its meetings at Norwich during last year. "Madsen's "Danish Antiquities," containing forty-five carefully executed plates, representing the Stone Age, is also just now exciting some attention. It would almost seem as if the present study of mankind was man; and it would also seem that acknowledged facts can only be explained, naturally and philosophically, on the hypothesis of the descent of the tribes of mankind from one pair.

(*For Remainder of Literature see Page* 1199.)

* Obstinate.

† *A Manual of Ethnology, or, the Races of the Old World.* By CHARLES L. BRACE, Author of "Home Life in Germany," "Norde Folk," &c. (London: John Murray.)

Pre-historic Nations. By JOHN D. BALDWIN, M.A. (London: Sampson Low, Son and Marston. 1869.)

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